



News Release

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TELUS helps Haida Gwaii residents reap benefits of high-speed Internet access

GwaiiTel, TELUS and the Province partner to bridge the digital divide

Vancouver, B.C. – Haida Gwaii residents are taking advantage of their new high-speed Internet service to preserve the Haida language, gain more efficient access to health care, and conduct business around the world.

In April 2005, the Province and TELUS announced they would connect 119 rural communities to high-speed Internet under the Connecting Communities Agreement. Seven communities on the Haida Gwaii, also known as the Queen Charlotte Islands, are among those now taking advantage of new opportunities in health care, education and economic development. Haida Gwaii residents receive high-speed service from GwaiiTel's Haida Gwaii Community Network, a local Internet service provider purchasing wholesale broadband from TELUS, which created the world's longest over-water radio Internet transmission to bring the service to them.

"I congratulate GwaiiTel for having the vision and determination to bring high-speed Internet to homes and businesses on Haida Gwaii," said Olga Ilich, B.C. Minister of Labour and Citizens' Services. "By bridging the digital divide, the government of B.C. and our partner, TELUS, are opening up new opportunities in hundreds of communities across the province."

Following the completion of the work by TELUS to bring broadband connectivity to a central point, GwaiiTel connected seven service centres ('POP' sites) with the Haida Gwaii Community Network and formed alliances with local Internet Service Providers to develop last-mile infrastructure and connect homes and businesses. Examples of how broadband is changing peoples' lives in the Islands' communities include:

- Health care workers at the Skidegate Health Centre now have access to online resources, such as collaborating with Health Canada for research, and on-going staff training and development, using high-speed access. The Centre also anticipates saving time and money as administrative meetings and patient consultations using videoconferencing will reduce the need to travel. With a monthly average of 40 patients traveling for specialist consultations at a cost of approximately \$1,800 per trip, the potential cost savings are substantial.
- For Jones-Davies and Davies and Laughing Sea Design, a local web site developer and design house, the broader access to high-speed connectivity has meant more business. The company has produced more websites in the first few months of this year than it has in the last couple of years combined as more people get on-line. High-speed connectivity has also resulted in greater efficiencies by reducing the need for couriers and travel time.

- High-speed access will allow the Skidegate Haida Immersion Program to support their work preserving the endangered Haida language. Elders currently gather daily to record the language and utilizing high-speed Internet for archiving purposes will help future generations and those in other communities connect with their language.

“We are extremely proud to partner with the Government and local partners to make a positive difference in the lives of British Columbians,” said Joe Grech, TELUS executive vice-president of Network Operations. “By extending affordable high-speed Internet access to rural and remote communities, TELUS is realizing our vision of creating equal opportunities for everyone across the province.”

“Access to high-speed internet is changing how people in Haida Gwaii live, from being able to access educational resources in their homes to using the Internet to advertise our local businesses to the global community,” said GwaiiTel president Brad Setso. “This is an historic achievement that will benefit our Islands’ people and strengthen our communities.”

TELUS is investing \$110 million to bring high-speed Internet service to B.C. communities through the Connecting Communities Agreement. Since the agreement was announced, TELUS has completed the work required to bring high-speed Internet service to 116 communities. TELUS has overcome a number of hurdles presented by B.C.’s vast geography during this project and is actively working to connect the three remaining communities. The investment is an extension of the company’s commitment to B.C. and builds on the \$2.2 billion that TELUS has invested in broadband infrastructure across the province in the last five years.

For more information, visit the Connecting Communities Website at www.network.gov.bc.ca or www.telus.com/connectingcommunities.

Network BC is a dedicated project office within the Ministry of Labour and Citizens’ Services, working with British Columbia communities and the private sector to connect all B.C. communities to broadband telecommunications networks.

About TELUS

TELUS (TSX: T, T.A; NYSE: TU) is a leading national telecommunications company in Canada, with \$8.8 billion of annual revenue and 10.8 million customer connections including 5.1 million wireless subscribers, 4.5 million wireline network access lines and 1.1 million Internet subscribers. TELUS provides a wide range of communications products and services including data, Internet protocol (IP), voice, entertainment and video. For more information about TELUS, please visit telus.com.

About GwaiiTel

GwaiiTel is incorporated under the BC Societies Act. It operates the Haida Gwaii Community Network to serve island communities in cooperation with local ISPs. For more information about GwaiiTel please visit gwaitel.com.

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